

# Welcoming Dance Environment

## Organization Guidelines for Dealing with Inappropriate Behavior

### Club or Organization Policy

References in the policy to the club, organization, leaders and the governing body refer to those listed below.

Club or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Leader (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Governing Body \_\_\_\_\_

Contact (Name) for Incident Reports \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

The club or organization named above strives to provide an environment that is safe, secure, and welcoming for all participants. Ideally, all dancers will be comfortable and will enjoy their time in the square dance environment. The club or organization discourages inappropriate behavior and does not tolerate any form of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, or bullying of dancers or other attendees at dance events.

The club or organization respects, and is bound by federal, regional, and local legislation that prohibits discrimination or bias based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability, and laws covering sexual and other harassment.

This policy applies to all events that the club or organization sponsors. This policy also applies to interactions that take place immediately before or after dance events (such as conversations in the parking lot after the official end of a dance).

Members, guests, and other participants in club or organization activities found violating this policy may be sanctioned at the discretion of the governing body. Violations of this policy, and instances of concerning behavior, shall be reported to leaders. Serious violations shall be reported to law enforcement personnel.

### **Directly Addressing Inappropriate Behavior**

Politely but firmly advise the person that you believe the behavior is inappropriate and that you want it to stop. Sometimes, an individual does not realize his or her behavior bothers or offends others. In many cases, individuals successfully resolve concerns through such discussions. If you choose not to address the issue directly with the person, or if the person fails to respect your request, then make a report.

### **When to Make a Report**

Immediately report any incident in which you are made to feel unsafe or unwelcome. If others have been made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe, please encourage them to make a report of the incident, or offer to make a report on their behalf. Early reporting facilitates corrections while the action is still minor, and can prevent situations from escalating.

You can choose to directly address inappropriate behavior and still make a report. Incident reports allow club or organization leaders to monitor a situation and provide sanctions later if necessary. They can help you confront an offender, or speak with the offender on your behalf with or without mentioning your name. Your courage in making a report can prevent similar incidents in the future.

## **How to Make a Report**

You can make a report of an incident to a club or organization leader in person. You can also phone or send an email to the contact person listed at the beginning. If warranted, also make a report to appropriate law enforcement personnel. If you need help to do so, ask a club or organization leader.

When making a report, your safety and privacy will be protected to the greatest degree possible. Please make it clear if you want to remain anonymous and that will be respected. You may bring someone to support you. You will not be asked to confront the offender. If you have concerns about the process, talk to a leader about ways to alleviate your concerns.

If you desire the governing body to take specific actions, please specify those actions. For example, your intent may only be to provide supporting information to document a pattern of behavior. Or, you may want the offender to be issued a warning or be banned from the club. The governing body cannot promise to apply the sanctions that you suggest, but your recommendations can help to characterize the severity of the incident.

All reports made to club leaders will be addressed with a sense of urgency and importance. Leaders will keep your information private but may share details with others as necessary during an investigation. If you want your report kept confidential, tell your first contact that you desire confidentiality, and that request will be respected as much as possible.

Club leaders can assist you to contact law enforcement or support services, provide escorts, or otherwise assist you in feeling safe and comfortable while dancing at club events. The club values your participation and will try to ensure that you have an enjoyable and positive square dance experience.

## **Procedure for Club or Organization Leaders to Take a Report**

- Find a private place and create a supportive environment.
- Ensure the well-being of the person making the report (“complainant”), and determine whether immediate assistance is needed.
- Take the report. Include in the report the incident as described by the complainant, accounts by witnesses and other involved parties, action taken by club or organization leaders, and communication by leaders with the complainant. Assure the complainant that he or she is being taken seriously. Do not make specific promises about what actions will be taken.
- Ascertain whether the incident is a one-time event or part of a pattern.
- Ask for information listed in the Inappropriate Behavior Complaint Form that has not already been provided by the complainant, but do not pressure the complainant to provide information which he or she is reluctant to offer.

- Ask the complainant to clarify how to make the complainant feel safe and secure for the rest of the dance and at future dances. If the complainant desires it, arrange for an escort by a trusted person. Do not try to mediate between the complainant and the offender.
- If the incident warrants involvement with local law enforcement, and if the complainant wishes to, assist in contacting local law enforcement. Do not pressure the complainant to take any action that the complainant does not wish to take.
- Refer to the Guidelines and Enforcement sections regarding follow up actions. Informal conversations are most effective when everyone remembers the events being discussed. Seriously disruptive issues must be addressed immediately. The governing body shall discuss and investigate reports of repeated prohibited behavior before any major action is taken.
- Respect the privacy of the complainant by not sharing unnecessary details with others, especially individuals who were not involved and who are not part of the club or organization leadership.

### **Guidelines for Addressing Complaints**

Upon receiving a complaint of any type of harassment or inappropriate behavior, the responsibilities of the club or organization include the following.

- Complaints will be treated confidentially and in a timely manner.
- All complaints under this policy will be investigated fairly and impartially.
- All members will be given fair and equitable treatment.
- Open discussion, communication, and consultation with all stakeholders shall occur when appropriate and necessary.
- Complainants have the right to discontinue a complaint.
- Complaints will be settled within the club or organization whenever possible.
- Action will be taken to ensure that any inappropriate and/or unlawful behavior stops.
- Complainants and witnesses shall not be retaliated against for making a complaint or providing evidence in an investigation.
- As necessary, complaints may be referred to appropriate outside authorities.

### **Enforcement**

Participants asked by anyone to stop any prohibited behavior are expected to comply immediately. If a participant engages in prohibited behavior, club leaders may take any actions necessary to ensure that club events provide a welcoming environment for the other participants. In many cases, the first action will be an informal conversation by club leaders with the offender, or a formal warning to stop a certain behavior.

The club or organization may impose more serious sanctions when necessary. Serious long-term sanctions, such as bans from future events, require action and approval by the governing body. This is reserved for egregious violations of this policy or as a last resort when other actions have not stopped the behavior.

Club or organization leaders may take immediate action to redress anything designed to, or with the clear impact of, disrupting an event or making the environment hostile or uncomfortable for any participants.

## **Inappropriate Behavior Complaint Form**

Name of Person Filing Complaint:	Date Incident Occurred:
Complainant Address: Phone: Email:	Person Named in Complaint:
Summary of the Incident – Please include the following (use more space as needed): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What happened? Where did it happen? When did it happen?</li><li>▪ Were there witnesses?</li><li>▪ Give a detailed description of the incident and surrounding circumstances.</li><li>▪ What steps does the complainant want to resolve the situation?</li><li>▪ Does the complainant want to file a report with authorities?</li></ul>	

**Inappropriate Behavior Complaint Form – page 2**

Name of Person Receiving the Complaint:	Date Complaint Received:
Actions Taken: (What was done to resolve complaint and when?)	
Names of Those Involved in Decision Making or Actions Taken:	
Result of Actions Taken:	
Is the Incident Considered Resolved? ___ Yes ___ No (If “No”, please explain status.)  Date: _____ Name of Person Completing This Form: _____	

(Please use additional pages as needed.)